

Backcountry Camping Trip Guide

Two Nights

National Park Service
U. S. Department of the Interior
Shenandoah National Park
Emergency: 1-800-732-0911



Compton Gap, Bluff, and Mount Marshall

Standard - Circuit

Level: Experienced

Total Length: 20.5 to 40 miles

Trip Description: Views, outstanding geology, wilderness forest, flexible route with side trip options

Entry: Compton Gap Boundary

North District; East side; Route # 610

Exit: Compton Gap Boundary

North District; East side; Route # 610

Map(s): PATC # 9 North District

Day One

Campsite: Mount Marshall Trail - backcountry

5.7 to 8.7 miles

Park at Chester Gap.

Hike up Compton Gap Trail, 0.5 mile.

Turn stay straight, now on the Appalachian Trail (AT) and hike south 3.8 miles.

(Be sure to take both side trails at Compton Peak; add 0.4 mile.)

Turn left on Jenkins Gap Trail, hiking a short distance to Skyline Drive.

Turn right, hiking south on Skyline Drive a short distance to Mt. Marshall trailhead.

Turn left onto Mt. Marshall Trail and hike from 1 to 4 miles.

Camp along Mt. Marshall Trail (Waterfall Branch is about 1 mile), or at the last dry camp near the intersection of Mt. Marshall Trail and Jordan River Trail (on the right/west side of the trail), hiking downhill on Jordan River Trail for water.

Day Two

Campsite: AT (1A) Boundary to Gravel Springs - backcountry

5 to 8 miles

Hike on Mt. Marshall Trail to Bluff Trail (0.5 to 2.5 miles).

Turn onto Bluff Trail and hike 2.3 miles.

Stay on main trail to Gravel Springs Hut (get water from the spring).

Hike up spur trail to AT and hike north 0.2 mile.

Cross Skyline Drive on the AT and continue north for 2 to 3 miles.

Dry-camp between North Marshall and Hogwallow Flats.

Day Three

6 to 8 miles

Continue hiking north on the AT, 6 to 7 miles.

Turn right onto Compton Gap Trail, hiking 0.5 miles to vehicle.

Notes

Camping:

Intermediate level – If staying out for a total of three nights, you may camp one night at Gravel Springs Hut.

Expert level – There are several options for camping on Mt. Marshall Trail and the AT, also. Browntown Trail– both at the top and bottom, and on portions of Big Devils Stairs Trail. With some exploration, you could find a place to camp on any of the side trails listed above.

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Options

Route options: 20.5 miles as described above; see map for additions,
and/or add additional 1.6 miles round trip to include Big Devils Stairs Trail;
and/or add additional 5.6 miles round trip to include Harris Hollow Trail;
and/or add additional 6.8 miles round trip to include Browntown Trail;
and/or add additional 2.6 miles round trip to include Jordan River Trail.